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Flexitime and Part-Time Employment Laws

Several newly enacted laws concerning Federal employment serve to enhance equal employment opportunity for minorities and women.

The Federal Employees Flexible and Compressed Work Schedules Act of 1978, signed by President Carter October 1, 1978, permits Federal agencies to experiment with flexible work hours. Flexitime experiments may include work weeks of four ten-hour days, and other work week variations. One hundred eighty days from the signing, the Act suspends previous laws regarding overtime pay for any time worked over eight hours per day or forty hours per week for a three-year experimentation period. Flexible working hours can particularly benefit working mothers, students, and older or handicapped workers in meeting the demands of personal and work life.

The Federal Employees Part-Time Career Employment Act of 1978, signed October 10, 1978, is designed to increase the number of part-time jobs in the Federal Government, and requires agencies to expand part-time job opportunities at all grade levels up to GS-16 and equivalent. By mid-April 1979, the Office of Personnel Management will issue regulations implementing this Act.

This new law removes two past obstacles to the use of more part-time employees. The first obstacle concerns each agency's employment ceiling limit . . . the limit on the number of employees it can have. Heretofore, part-time employees have been counted the same as full-time employees toward the ceiling limit. Effective October 1, 1980, however, part-time employees will be prorated toward the limit according to the amount of time they work. For example, two half-time worker will count as one full-time worker.

The second obstacle concerns the amount the Government pays toward employee health insurance for part-time employees. Government contributions will now be prorated according to the amount of time the part-timer works. This does not apply to part-time workers employed

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EEO Spotlight

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Volume 11 Number 1 November-December 1978

EEO Reform and SPOTLIGHT

This is the last issue of the EEO SPOTLIGHT before implementation of equal employment opportunity and civil service reorganization, and civil service reform. In January 1979, equal opportunity enforcement functions for the Federal sector will be transferred from the Civil Service Commission to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; the Civil Service Commission will be divided into two new agencies — Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB); and a third new agency, the Federal Labor Relations Authority, will be established.

The Office of Personnel Management will continue to publish the SPOTLIGHT. However, we anticipate some changes as the emphasis of activities in the central personnel agency (OPM) shifts from equal employment opportunity enforcement to the creative use of the Federal personnel system in developing and implementing affirmative action programs.

The OPM will work with the EEOC to make sure the operation of the Government's personnel system is consistent with Federal equal employment opportunity policy. Among the major objectives of the new organization will be the development of innovative personnel techniques which contribute to agency affirmative action efforts; improved and expanded data systems for better affirmative action planning and assessment; and application of upward mobility program concepts to higher level jobs.

The SPOTLIGHT will feature affirmative employment programs in the Federal service by providing "how to" and follow-up articles on successful agency programs and by providing current information on the Federal Women's Program, the Hispanic Employment Program, the Upward Mobility Program, and programs for employment of the handicapped and veterans.

VRA Amendments

President Carter recently signed into law a provision extending and liberalizing existing Veterans' Readjustment Appointment (VRA) authority.

Originally established by Executive Order 11521 on March 26, 1970, the VRA authority provides improved Federal employment opportunities along with training or education for Vietnam-era veterans (VEVs), many of whom have experienced difficulty in obtaining employment because of limited education, skills, training, and work experience. Federal agencies may hire VEVs without competition in civil service examinations and subsequently convert them to career-conditional appointments after two years of satisfactory employment and training.

Public Law 95-520 amends existing VRA authority by: raising the maximum grade level of VRA appointments from GS-5 to GS-7 or equivalent; removing the one-year time limit for obtaining a VRA appointment (this has the effect of making all VEVs who are otherwise qualified eligible for a VRA appointment); removing the 14-year education restriction for compensably disabled veterans and veterans discharged because of service-connected disabilities; and changing the category of discharge required for a VRA appointment from "under honorable conditions" to "other than a dishonorable discharge."

In a special message to heads of all departments and agencies on October 10, 1978, President Carter directed Federal agencies to establish goals and timetables for the implementation of the VRA program. The Civil Service Commission is responsible for coordinating this effort.

Additional information concerning the amended VRA legislation and specific job information can be obtained from Federal Job Information Centers or the employment offices of most Federal agencies.

New Legislation and the Handicapped

Legislation enacted during 1978 has significant impact on Federal employment programs for handicapped persons, including disabled veterans. Also, as part of the President's equal employment opportunity reorganization, responsibility for monitoring Federal agency affirmative action program plans on the hiring, placement and advancement of handicapped persons, and for the development of uniform standards and procedures by Federal departments and agencies, will be transferred to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in January 1979. The transfer of EEO enforcement functions includes activities related to the enforcement of statutory prohibitions against employment discrimination because of handicap.

The EEOC will be designated as CoChair — along with the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare — of the Interagency Committee on Handicapped Employees (ICHE). The cochairmanship was formerly vested in the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission. The secretariat of the ICHE also will be transferred to the EEOC.

Under the Civil Service Reform Act, agencies will be authorized, beginning in January 1979, to employ interpreters for deaf employees and reading assistants for blind employees. Previously, such assistants were unpaid, or were paid by the handicapped employee or from funds from private organizations.

Within the Office of Personnel Management, the Office of Selective Placement will continue to carry out leadership responsibilities in the development of sound Federal personnel management practices with relation to the employment of handicapped persons.

For more information contact the Office of Selective Placement, CSC, 1900 E St., NW, Washington, DC 20415.

Puerto Rican Recruitment Sources Booklet

The Hispanic Employment Program Office of the Civil Service Commission, in conjunction with the Office of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, developed a recruitment sources booklet to provide Federal agencies with ready information regarding Puerto Rican recruitment sources. The Puerto Rican Recruitment Sources Booklet is designed to facilitate communication between Federal agencies and Puerto Rican colleges, universities, professional associations, and other relevant organizations.

Besides tips on recruiting in Puerto Rico, the booklet lists accredited colleges and universities in Puerto Rico and includes information concerning placement personnel, course offerings, enrollments, addresses and telephone numbers of professional, academic, student, and other organizations as well as information regarding media sources on the island.

Many qualified graduates come from accredited institutions in Puerto Rico each year. Since the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is part of the United States, the vast majority of these graduates are United States citizens by birthright or by virtue of the Jones Act of 1917.

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Upward Mobility Success at NPIC

The National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC), managed by the Central Intelligence Agency, implemented an upward mobility program in 1971. The Director's Opportunity Program is an example of a successful upward mobility effort.

One way NPIC measures program success is by monitoring career progress of participants. For example, the career progress of one upward mobility participant began when he went to work for the CIA as a GS-4 Information Control Clerk. In this position he provided photographic storage and retrieval services to Intelligence Analysts. After six and one-half years as an Information Control Clerk he had reached the GS-7 grade level and had received cross training in other job-related areas. He was also attending evening courses at a local university.

In May of 1974 the Director's Opportunity Program (DOP) announced an upward mobility position, Imagery Analyst Trainee, and the Information Control Clerk, who recalled having done related work when he was in the Air Force, applied for the job and was selected. Selection for the position was based on merit factors and involved interviews and personnel folder reviews.

He is now a GS-10 Imagery Analyst, a job series which ranges in grade from GS-8 to GS-12. Promotions are in one-grade intervals and, under the CIA's personnel system, are competitive at all grade levels. This individual can expect to progress to GS-12 grade level as he gains experience and knowledge of the field. If he is selected for supervisory responsibilities, he may be promoted to grade levels higher than GS-12 depending on the availability of appropriate positions. As a GS-10 Imagery Analyst, his duties cover important military concerns worldwide. He writes technical reports on foreign military installations and is a member of several intelligence work groups.

As an upward mobility program participant, he received on-the-job training and attended classes pertaining to his present duties. Most of this training was provided under the DOP. He also continued his evening university classes. Today, although he is secure in his knowledge of his job, he must continue his training so as to keep pace with changing trends in the intelligence field.

The success of this employee was due largely to his own desire to succeed, his initiative, and his ability to acquire and apply new skills and knowledge during the training period. His supervisor played an important role in determining what training was needed, and in providing the necessary guidance and counseling.

The Director's Opportunity Program is open to all clerical and technical employees at GS-8 and below who have at least one year of employment with the agency and currently assigned to the National Photographic Interpretation Center.

The DOP was established in 1971 to provide non-professional NPIC employees an opportunity to obtain the experience and training needed to qualify for professional or technical careers. All career-status employees who are in clerical or technical position with limited opportunity for advancement are eligible. The program is administered by the Director's Opportunity Panel, made up of NPIC employees representing a cross-section of disciplines and grade levels. During the early stages of the program, a register of employees who were in grades below GS-8 and had indicated interest in participating in the program was established by the Panel. The names of those registrants who are not selected for an upward mobility position that is announced this year will remain on the register for consideration in future program announcements.

The Panel meets yearly with NPIC's office heads to determine the number of positions available to the program. When the position vacancies are published, a Panel member contacts each person listed on the register to determine his/her interest and to notify each of the time and location of an orientation briefing. The briefing provides an opportunity for the supervisor to discuss in detail the position being offered and to allow employees an opportunity to ask questions before they decide whether to apply.

The Panel reviews the personnel folders of applicants and submits them to the sponsoring supervisor. After the supervisor has made a selection, the name is submited to the DOP Panel for concurrence, then sent to the Director of NPIC for final approval.

The sponsoring supervisor prepares a training plan tailored to the needs of each selectee. Quarterly progress reports are sent to the Panel which then interviews both selectee and supervisor. Selectees who are eligible may be considered for promotion during the training period.

Upon satisfactory completion of the approved program,

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EEO Spotlight

Editor: Ed Sheli

The Chairman of the U.S. Civil Service Commission has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of public business required by law of this agency. Use of funds for printing of this periodical has been approved by the Director, Office of Management and Budget through March 31, 1980.

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(These courses are offered in the Washington, D.C. area; for further information, contact the EEO Training Institute, Bureau of Training, U.S. Civil Service Commission, Washington, D.C. 20415. Many of the same courses are offered at the Commission's 10 regional training centers; for information on these field offerings, contact the nearest USCSC regional office.)

PUERTO RICO

Historically, the island's work force has experienced underemployment, and this situation - coupled with a large number of graduates from higher level learning institutions — results in excellent recruiting possibilities. For example, the Mayaguez campus of the University of Puerto Rico alone turned out 377 graduates with bachelor's degrees in engineering in 1977. Puerto Rican educational systems also excel in the secretarial sciences and graduate a large number of secretaries with two-year associate of arts degrees. The University is unusual in that it offers four-year degrees in the secretarial sciences.

The Puerto Rican Recruitment Sources Booklet, together with the revised version of the Hispanic Recruitment Sources Booklet (which is essentially designed to assist in recruitment of Hispanics on the mainland) will be available for purchase soon through the Government Printing Office.

For more information, contact the Hispanic Employment Program Office, CSC, 1900 E. St., NW Room 7536, Washington, DC 20415.

PART-TIME

before the new Act was passed.

Civil Service Commission Chairman Alan K. Campbell said of the Act, "It's an employment option that can help agencies do their jobs better and at the same time provide employment opportunities for many capable and committed individuals who cannot work full-time."

The Federal Employees Flexible and Compressed Work Schedules Act of 1978, also allows an employee to take time off from work for religious reasons and compensate by working overtime instead of having to use annual leave or lose pay. The employee will work overtime hours equal to the time taken off from the normal work schedule. The compensatory overtime can be worked either before or after the time off, but must be completed within a reasonable period. This provision was effective October 29, 1978.

NPIC

usually after one year, the selectee is permanently assigned to his/her new office. If, at any time, it becomes necessary to terminate training, the selectee is reassigned to a position similar to the one they left.

This agency feels that only with the support and efforts of supervisors, personnel and training specialists can an agency expect continued success in an upward mobility program.

For more information contact
Upward Mobility Program Manager
Washington, D.C. 20505

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